A Muslim's Defense of Islam Part 2

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Pascal Wager

This is Pascal's infamous Wager. The seventeenth century mathematician, Blaise Pascal argued: "If you erroneously believe in God, you lose nothing (assuming that death is the absolute end), whereas if you correctly believe in God, you gain everything (eternal bliss). But if you correctly disbelieve in God, you gain nothing (death ends all), whereas if you erroneously disbelieve in God, you lose everything (eternal damnation)."

The argument is wrong. One simply cannot will himself to believe something that he believes to be false. This is like saying, even though your reason says 2 + 2 = 4, Joe who claims to be the prophet of God says 2 + 2 = 5. Now suppose you are right and Joe is a liar. So what? You lose nothing by believing in him. But if Joe is telling the truth and you don't believe him then you'll go to hell. Therefore it is better to believe in Joe, even though what he says sounds irrational. This is basically the idea behind Pascal's wager. It is just a fallacy. It is not for rational people. It is sheer nonsense. If you want to believe in God, you should believe in him because it makes sense to you, because you can't bring yourself to accept that the universe has come to exist without a creator, because you are not convinced that evolution alone can produce this much variety in life. That is fine. At least you have made your choice based on some logical reasoning. You reasons may be flawed but you believe in them in good faith. To use Pascal's wager as the reason to believe is sheer stupidity. That argument is for fools. You can't believe in something out of fear.

Assuming God exists and assuming he is so evil that he will burn people for not worshipping him, which god is he? Each religion has its own god. There are many gods. Which one I should believe? What if by error I believe in a wrong God? Each religion and each sect claims to have the monopoly of the truth. Which one is right? Even if one decides to submit his intelligence and believe in absurdities for the fear of punishment, one still could risk going to hell for believing in a wrong religion and a wrong god. The Christians believe in God. Did Muhammad think they will go to heaven? Of course not! He said they are misguided. The verse 9:29 exhorts Muslims to fight the people of the Book (Jews and Christians) and extort money from them. For Muhammad it was not good enough to believe in God. One had to also believe in him. "And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will NEVER be accepted of him, and in the Hereafter he will be one of the losers." (Q. 3:85) If the punishment of disbelief is so harsh, why has God not made his existence more clear?

Pascal's wager is for people with low intelligence. There are many intelligent people among religious people, but they never use Pascal's wager as the basis of their belief because it is foolish and extortionist. The belief in God must be rational. It must not be based on threats and extortions. Pascal's wager is Muslims' main argument. I have not received an email

from a Muslim who has not used this fallacious argument and has not threatened me with the Day of Judgment. This is another indication that Muslims do not use their intelligence and consequently are less rational than people of other faiths.

It is NOT true that we lose nothing by believing in a lie. We lose a lot. We lose our intelligence, our humanity, our dignity, our goodness. We will be reduced to mindless sheep. There is a string attached in believing in lies. That string is the leash that such belief places on your necks. Once you submit to a lie you become a slave, a putty in the hands of any con man who can make you do anything. Irrational beliefs are used to manipulate people. You want to wage war? Evoke the name of God. You want to overthrow a government and start a revolution? Talk to people about God and their duties to him. You want them to become suicide bombers, tell them about the the "love" of God. You want to subdue women? Say God has ordered them to obey you. You want to beat them? No problem. Tell them God has given you the right to do so. Just read a few verses from the “words of God” and you’ll have millions of fools pouring into the streets, foaming their mouths and committing all sorts of atrocities so you can achieve your goal. Mirza Malkam Khan (1831-1908), an Armenian who converted to Islam and together with Jamaleddin Afghani launched the idea of an “Islamic Renaissance” (*An-Nahda),* had a slogan of unrivaled cynicism: “***Tell the Muslims something is in the Qur’an, and they will die for you***.”

It is foolish to believe in a lie just because someone threatens you with hell. No, the chance that one of us is right is not 50/50. The chance that you are right is ZERO. I am not going to bet on zero, just because you threaten me. We live in the 21st century. It is pathetic that one should still believe in such absurdities and nonsense. Pascal was a smart man. His wager shows that even smart people can say very stupid things. That is why argumentum as verecundiam is a fallacy.

> Oh and before you assume that I have forgotten, rest assured, I shall discuss the change in pronoun from first to third by Allah SWT in Holy Quran. In your debate with Mr. Ghamidi & Mr. Zaheer, I am sure you amalgamated 2 arguments in a single statement to overwhelm your opponent (s). I would not upbraid you for this. What wouldn’t a man do for glory, eh Mr Sina? But in edified aptitude, I shall handle argument to argument, for your easier comprehension.

I don’t think there is any need to continue this debate. You berated other scholars including Dr. Zaheer for not understanding Islam, yet you did not bring anything new to the table and engaged in most puerile logical fallacies. I suggest you continue your discussion in the forum. Dr. Zaheer has earned my utmost respect. He is not only bright but also a good person. He is caught in the throes of cognitive dissonance. He is being torn by his conscience on one hand and his faith on the other. Don’t forget that he is a religious scholar. His livelihood depends on Islam. For him, losing faith means losing everything. Therefore Islam must be true because the alternative is devastating. Despite that Dr. Zaheer is doing all he can to humanize Muslims: Defying all odds he tries to make

them moderate. I have nothing but respect for this man and I do not appreciate him being decried.

Now, Sina, as regards the issue you also brought up of the change in pronoun in the injunctions of the Holy Quran. Sina, the Quran is not your typical, inside the box thinking type of literary work that you drawing comparison towards. Let us observe the injunctions you have quoted.

And We [1st person plural] did not send before you any messenger but We revealed to him that there is no god but Me, [1st person singular] therefore serve Me. And they say: The Beneficent Allah has taken to Himself a son. Glory be to Him.[3rd person singular] Nay! they are honored servants They do not precede Him in speech and (only) according to His commandment do they act. He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they do not intercede except for him whom He approves and for fear of Him they tremble. And whoever of them should say: Surely I am a god besides Him, such a one do We recompense with hell; thus do, We recompense the unjust. (21:25-29)

According to Islam, Allah SWT has 99 names, as mentioned in various places of the Holy Quran. Each one describing an attribute of Allah SWT like no other. All these attributes belong to Allah SWT. I know you have come to that understanding a

s regards Islam, however you do not believe in Him. The answer to your question is so apparent in the same verse. It is so clear that I wonder how it escaped someone of your level of observation. In the first part of the verse, And We [1st person plural] did not send before you any messenger but We revealed to him…… Allah SWT, here, is referring to all His attributes together. These are all His names and in all His qualities i.e. The One, The Most Merciful, The Beneficent, The Sublime, The Cherisher, The Sustainer, The Master, The Most High, The Most Glorious, The Most Holy, The Creator, The Victorious, The Witness etc. Each one of these qualities is a stand alone attribute, very unique in nature. He is giving clear reference that it is in the ambit of all His qualities/attributes that He sent messengers with the message. Hence the 1st person plural; a direct reference to ALL of Allah's SWT attributes being employed in realizing a single act – sending messengers with the message. What is the message? This is where the turn happens, doesn't it Sina? The message is…….. **that there is no god but Me,** [1st person singular] therefore serve Me. Here Allah SWT is so clear. He refers to the message as being He is The One. This is a direct reference to only ONE of his qualities. The Tawheed of Allah SWT. **It comes naturally that He being the Lord has the prerogative of choosing how He refers to Himself**. The Tawheed as clearly stipulated in this verse is a reference to just a single attribute of Allah SWT that He makes, hence the 1st person singular. I am not in anyway asking you to believe in the Oneness of Allah SWT or His attributes. Please read carefully. All I am doing is giving you **a logical explanation** as to the pronoun reference from a grammatical and quotation perspective. Kapish??!! Let me move ahead. And they say: **The Beneficent Allah has taken to Himself a son. Glory be to Him.** [3rd person singular]. I wonder how this escaped your "scholarly" perception, Sina. Allah SWT here is quoting what the Christians believe. The Christians say this while in reference to Allah SWT as a 3rd person singular and Allah SWT has quoted exactly what they say in verbatim. Now if someone speaks in regard another who is not party to the conversation, would the former not refer to the later in 3rd person? Simple English grammar. So naturally the reference to Allah SWT in 3rd person singular. It is so logical. Maybe you needed it to be in quote commas ("…"), Sina? As I keep arguing this point out, I feel you are just doing this as means of stand off, by any means necessary. But it must be my

biased nature. I am sure; it is an issue of misunderstanding. However, as we go on, we find…. Nay! they are honored servants They do not precede Him in speech and (only) according to……. In essence, Sina, Allah SWT is now quoting what really should have been said by the speakers in the verse or what reply they got from the group of believers facing them. Again, if the speakers would have spoken the truth (Nay!....), they would have still referred to Allah SWT in 3rd person singular. Or if a group of believers was answering them back, they would also have to refer to Allah SWT in 3rd person singular. Once again, simple English grammar.

You call this logical explanation? This is getting from bad to worse. So according to your "logical explanation," if a man is also a father, a son, educated, talented, funny, handsome, wise, tall, etc., he can refer to himself as "we" because he has a multitude of attributes? What part of this explanation is logical? Why should God switch from 1st person plural to first person singular when he wants to deliver his message? It is still the same person with the same attributes. Why suddenly "We" becomes "I" and then "I" changes to "He?" It seems to be a bit too crowded up there. So why do you criticize Christians for believing in trinity, when you are telling us that God is a multitude? No, it is not when Allah is quoting others talking about him that he refers to himself as "He". Here is the verse you quoted: "They say: "Allah hath begotten a son": Glory be to Him.-Nay, to Him belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth: everything renders worship to Him." (*2.116__)* Who is saying Glory be to him, Nay to Him belongs...? It is not the Christians who say this but the author of the Quran. If the author of the Quran is Allah, why is he referring to himself in third person? This is like I say, "Ali Sina's enemies say, 'Ali is a liar.' Far from it, he is a truthful man." Is this correct speech? Speaking in the third person about yourself is the sign of mental disorder. Doesn't this confuse the reader as who the speaker is?

Your explanation is "It comes naturally that He being the Lord has the prerogative of choosing how He refers to Himself."

That is nonsense. God is talking to us humans. He must speak to us in a language that we understand. His speech must be clear and not confusing and incoherent. What is the point of sending a message if that message is not clear? Who said God is allowed to say any balderdash and break all the rules of grammar? Language is a contract between two people. Both sides must understand the terms of it. If one's speech is incomprehensible to the other, the contract is null. If God's message is not clear, it is not binding. Breaking the rules of grammar confuses the readers. Then how could God send to hell those who are confused and reject him as a result?

I have noted in your debate, in the first exchange you had with the 2 gentlemen, their explanations were based on the Holy Quran and Sunnah. Look clearly Sina, Allah SWT being true to His word, I have not used a single hadith/sunnah to prove any of the verses of the Holy Quran. The Holy Quran itself is enough in defense. Surely We have revealed the Reminder and surely We shall be its protectors. (Holy Quran).

You have proven nothing yet. Where is the proof?

> I hope I won't need to explain the use of 1st person plural pronoun in this instance. In all fairness, Mr Sina, you do agree that Allah SWT can change His reference pronoun as He so wishes. Unless, you, as you put it in your debate, want a WRITTEN notification, in a work of literature that the writer now decides to change his pronoun. I think a request of notification is rather out of sorts and applies to formal agreements and contractual documents not works of literature. Probably we can also throw out Shakespeare as he never gave notification of changes from plays to poetry and back to plays, don't you think? I am sure we can all be more logical as regards our reservations on issues and ponder over them prior to airing our misconceptions publicly.Volume 1: Surah Fateha, Verses 1-5
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> > In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful (1). All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds (2). The Beneficent the Merciful (3). The Master of the Day of Judgment (4). Thee do we worship and Thee do we beseech for help (5).
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> The verse: "Thee do we worship", shows that the whole chapter is revealed on behalf of man. Allah teaches him in this chapter how to praise his Lord and how to show his allegiance to, and humility towards, Him. And the phrase, "All praise is due to Allah", further strengthens this inference, as will be seen in the next paragraph.
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> Sina, here Allah SWT so aptly, in the first chapter of His Holy Book, the Book of life, at the onset, just like after birth of a child, the parent, spoon feeds the child with something palatable, Allah SWT spoon feeds His people with the manner of approaching Him in supplication. Allah SWT, as He always promises, shows the way to mankind, in verbatim, how to supplicate and ask for help and guidance. And true to action, the truthful ones did. And in His Magnificence and Most Generous, responded again by sending 113 further chapters in guidance to the supplication. We ask for His guidance 5 times daily, in obligatory prayers.

Where in this sura does it say that I, Allah, am going to teach you earthlings how to worship me? It is you who make this unsubstantiated claim. Also who told you this sura is the first sura revealed? The scholars agree that sura *Alaqa* is the first sura while sura *Fatiha*, the one you quoted, is the fifth one.

People often take the name of one of their great and powerful personalities at the time of doing or beginning a work. By this association, it is believed, the work would achieve success, greatness and blessings; or that it would be a memorial to keep the named one's memory alive for ever. This is also observed in naming a child, a project, a house or an association - they give it the name of a deeply loved or highly respected person, so that his name would continue in this form; for example, a man names his son after his father, in order to perpetuate the father's memory.

This verse runs on the same line. Allah began His speech with His Own name - Great is His name - so that the ideas taught in this chapter be stamped by, and associated with it. Also, it teaches a lesson to mankind, showing them the perfect manner of starting all their talks and actions; it guides them to put the stamp of the divine name on all their activities; doing every work for the sake of Allah, associating it with His good names and attributes. In this way that action would neither be rendered null and void, nor remain incomplete; it has been started in the name of Allah, and negation and annihilation cannot reach that sacred name.

Allah has declared variously in the Qur'an that what is not for His Person must perish, is in vain; He Will proceed to the deeds not done for His sake and shall render them as scattered floating dust; He shall forfeit what they have done and shall nullify their deeds; and that nothing shall remain except His honored Person.

Therefore, what is done for the sake of Allah and performed in His name shall continue and will not perish. Everything, every work and every affair shall have its share of eternity - as much as it is related to Allah. It is this reality that has been hinted at in the universally accepted tradition of the Prophet: "Every important affair, not begun with the name of Allah, shall remain incomplete…." The word al-abtar (translated here as "incomplete'') means a thing whose end is cut off, an animal whose tail is severed.

This is a load of nonsense. Muslims don't lift a finger without saying their *bismillah* (In the name of Allah). What have they achieved so far? Nothing! Muslim countries are bankrupt. If it were not for oil, which the kuffar have found a use for, Muslims would be still running after their camels, collecting dung for fuel. Look at the non-Muslim word, all the great achievements in science, technology, all the marvels of the modern world, including this computer in front of you and this Internet that you use, are made by kuffar without ever mentioning the name of Allah. The fallacy of your claim that "every important affair, not begun with the name of Allah, shall remain incomplete" is so glaringly obvious that there is no need to refute it.

The verse: "Thee do we worship", shows that the whole chapter is revealed on behalf of man. Allah teaches him in this chapter how to praise his Lord and how to show his allegiance to, and humility towards, Him. And the phrase, "All praise is due to Allah", further strengthens this inference.

Think that this chapter i an instruction manual of how the created is required to communicate to his Creator. I am not comparing it to an instrcution manual of a car or radio, Sina, knowing aptly your mode of reasoning. The Creator is unique and His created beings are unique, in their own right.

Zuher

Please continue the rest of your debate in the forum. From this moment on, I will no longer debate with anonymous people. If you want to debate with me, you must be a recognized name and a reputed scholar of Islam.

Muslims enter into debate anonymously while repeating the same absurdities and are defeated. Then others come and decry the previous contenders saying, "Ah but those whom you defeated were not scholars." So from now on, I am not going to debate with anonymous people.

As of this day I am doubling my monetary offer. If you are not a reputable scholar, someone who has been in the news, someone who has a fan club and a following, you can still win the prize. All you have to do is persuade a scholar to debate with me. If he (she) disproves my charges or can prove that Muhammad was a prophet of God, both you and he (she) will be rewarded $50,000 each. This is to encourage you to write to your most admired scholar and convince him (her) that Islam is in danger and he (she) should do something about it.

Please note that I will not accept face to face debates. The debates must be only in writing. They can be published in any site. I will publish them in this site too.

Wish you the best

Ali Sina